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AUTHOR Bellon, Jerry J.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

Tennessee's Comprehensive Educational Reform act of 1984 created a widely publicized career-ladder program that provided extended contract opportunities as incentives to teachers receiving level II or III status. A comprehensive evaluation study found that extended contract expenditures and resource-allocation processes were not always driven by student needs. This paper reports results of a 1991-92 study to determine Tennessee schools' progress in implementing the needs assessment mandated in 1988 legislation. The study also aimed to identify difficulties in meeting established guidelines, determine significant areas of student concern, and determine how the needs assessment process affected the extended contract program and overall education efforts. Methodology included analysis of needs assessment reports submitted during 1991-92 and previous years and semistructured interviews with a stratified random sample (34 percent) of the 143 extended contract coordinators who conducted needs assessments. Findings showed an improvement in needs assessment report quality during the 3-year implementation period. Primary student concerns were improvement of academic performance, expansion of academic opportunities, reduction of at-risk and dropout numbers, and improvement of parent involvement. The needs assessment process was congruent with extended contract program goals and improved overall education efforts. Appendices contain ratings of needs assessments, areas of prioritized needs, and a ranking of student needs. (MLH)

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J. Bellon, M.A. Blank, D. Brian, C. Kershaw, A. Lambert, M. Perkins

Jerry J. Bellon
117 Claxton Educ. Building
The University of Tennessee
Knoxville, TN 37996-3400

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Introduction

Tennessee's Comprehensive Educational Reform Act of 1984 created a widely publicized Career Ladder Program. A major component of the Career Ladder Program provided extended contract opportunities as incentives to teachers who received Career Level II or III status. A comprehensive study was conducted in 1987 to determine the overall effectiveness of the Career Ladder Program and the Extended Contract Program. As a result of this study, it was concluded that in many cases, Extended Contract expenditures or the processes used to allocate extended contract services and resources were not driven by identified student needs. In addition, it was found that there was no suggested process for school systems to use in determining areas of student need nor any means to prioritize their needs.

The findings from the study were the basis for legislation passed during the 1988 legislative session aimed at improving the Career Ladder Program. One of the important provisions of the legislation focused directly on the Extended Contract Program. The mandate stated that:

> local education agencies shall conduct annual needs assessments to determine the focus of their extended contract activities. The priority for such activities shall be student needs. Committees of local educators must conduct the assessments or certify the needs, as determined by local boards under guidelines promulgated by the state Commissioner of Education.

The primary intent of the legislation was to focus Extended Contract Programs on high priority student needs. The school systems were required to enact a needs assessment process that would involve appropriate educators in determining major areas of student needs. Extended contract resources were then expected to be allocated on supplemental services and activities that would have the most beneficial impact on students.

The Tennessee Department of Education was moving from the "first wave of reform" to the second. One of the hallmarks of the "second wave of reform" was to decentralize control so that local schools would have the authority and the initiative to make needed improvements. Site based management, shared leadership, and other efforts to move management of schools to the local level were being implemented in school systems across the country. These efforts were based upon the assumption that those at the local level should be given the responsibility for planning, implementing, and evaluating their own programs and directions.

The needs assessment program initiated in Tennessee was designed so that local school systems would be responsible for identifying their own high priority student needs and developing and assessing programs to address their special needs. The needs assessment process was based upon the following assumptions: school personnel must look beyond "wishes," "quick fixes," or activities that are not related to important student outcomes in their planning efforts; the knowledge of documented needs enables wise allocation of limited resources; and a comprehensive needs assessment process can provide the vehicle for addressing these challenges.

The 1989-90 school year was the initial year for implementing the provisions regarding extended contracts as mandated by the legislature in 1988. This was the first year the extended contracts

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were to be awarded based on high priority student needs as identified through a comprehensive needs assessment process rather than on the previous procedure of funding programs based on the Career Ladder status of educators within the system and their willingness to design or staff programs. This was a major shift in focus that brought about significant changes in the Extended Contract Program. It altered expectations for both state department and local personnel. The state department role became one of establishing guidelines and procedures, providing technical assistance, and monitoring programs to assure that resource allocation was consistent with program proposals. Local schools were given the responsibility of evaluating their Extended Contract Program annually to document the effectiveness of the services and activities in meeting student needs. Local school systems also have the responsibility to make needed adjustments in their services to better meet identified student needs.

In an effort to provide assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) in carrying out the 1988 legislation, a project team was appointed by the state Commissioner of Education to determine the capability of school systems to conduct needs assessments as well as the technical assistance that would be needed. The project team surveyed all 143 school systems and interviewed a random sample to determine the human, physical, and fiscal resources that were available for conducting needs assessments. As a result of this study, it was concluded that a comprehensive needs assessment process should be developed and that a training program should be provided for selected personnel from the 143 school systems. The needs assessment process was developed based on an indepth review of the literature, the collective experiences of project team members, and consideration of local realities and capabilities. A training program was developed, which included a needs assessment guide and a video tape, and training sessions were held throughout the state with representatives of all LEAs.

The decision was made by the Commissioner of Education and his staff to establish a center that would provide technical assistance to LEAs to help them conduct needs assessments consistent with the new guidelines. This center would also have the responsibility for evaluating all needs assessments and Extended Contract Program proposals. The center known as Evaluation, Review, and Assistance (ERA) services became operational in time to review needs assessments and Extended Contract Proposals in 1989-90. A thorough review and evaluation process was conducted by the ERA services to determine the quality of each needs assessment and the consistency of the proposed Extended Contract Program proposal with the identified high priority needs. Funds allocated to each LEA for the Extended Contract Program were distributed or denied based on the degree to which the program proposal addressed their documented student needs. Needs assessments and Extended Contract Program proposals have been reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis by the project team from 1989-90 to 1991-92.

Since the process was initiated in 1988, the project team has continued to work with all LEAs in a technical assistance role. The goal of the technical assistance has been to help each system adapt the process to its unique characteristics while continually improving the needs assessment process and long range planning capabilities. Feedback has been provided annually to each LEA to assist those involved in coordinating the process. Meetings have been held each year with representatives from every school system to provide an opportunity to share the feedback, to discuss any concerns facing the local representatives, or to clarify any areas of uncertainty regarding the process.

Current Study 1991-1992

To our knowledge, there are few states involved in as comprehensive an effort to determine student needs as Tennessee. As part of the formative evaluation process, the current study was conducted to determine the actual progress made by Tennessee's school systems during the three years that

the needs assessment process has been mandated. The focus of the study was on the ability of school systems to identify high priority student needs, to link the needs with program planning, and to evaluate the effectiveness of programs in meeting their high priority needs.

Objectives:

The objectives of the 1991-1992 study were to:

1. determine how well the needs assessments have met the established guidelines and standards,
2. identify difficulties experienced by school systems in conducting needs assessments,
3. determine significant areas of student concern across the state of Tennessee identified through the needs assessment process,
4. determine the impact of the needs assessment process on the Extended Contract Program, and
5. determine the impact of the needs assessment on overall educational efforts .

Methodology and Data Sources

Multiple data sources were used to address the study objectives. An analysis of all needs assessment reports submitted during the 1991-1992 school year as well as previous years was conducted to identify common strengths and pervasive problems. Comparisons were made between previous and current needs assessment reports and Extended Contract Program proposals to determine improvements and trends in student needs identified as priorities. The evaluation reports from local school systems were analyzed to determine the impact the programs have had in meeting student needs.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a stratified random sample (34%) of the 143 extended contract coordinators who were assigned the responsibility of conducting the needs assessment. The forty-nine representatives to be interviewed were chosen based on several criteria: geographic region, the quality of needs assessments, size and setting (urban, rural, special districts) of system, and the level of resources available to the system. Within each of the seven geographic regions, seven systems were selected for the interviews.

The interview questions were developed to elicit information about any educational improvements resulting from the needs assessment process, any side effects or problems related to the process, and any additional uses of the needs assessment information. Content analysis procedures were used to analyze interview data. The interviews produced qualitative data relative to conducting needs assessments and developing Extended Contract Program proposals. In addition, they provided a vehicle to determine the perceived impact of the process on local school systems and their students.

Findings

Findings are reported related to each objective of the study. Data sources and references to additional appendix information are identified with the findings.

1. <u>Degree to which the needs assessments have met the established guidelines and standards</u>
Since the process was initiated in 1988-1989, the adherence to the guidelines and standards, the overall quality of the needs assessments, and the Extended Contract Program impact have been monitored by ERA services for the State Department of Education. During the three year period of implementation, the majority of individual needs assessment reports have improved in overall quality. The greatest differences occurred between the first year, considered a developmental year,

and the second year during which 57% of the LEAs incorporated notable improvements. Another 32% were further improved during the third year. As of 1991-92, 10% of the needs assessments were rated as commendable, 58% as acceptable or highly acceptable, 28% as minimally acceptable, and 4% as unsatisfactory in adhering to the established guidelines and standards. (See Table 1, Appendix A for the number and percentage of systems within each rating category.)

While the overall quality of needs assessments has continued to improve for most school systems, there was greater variation among the components of the process. By 1991-92, nearly all school systems (97%) were incorporating the input of committees representative of various stakeholder groups and program areas into the process. Seventy-seven percent of the systems reported using qualitative and quantitative data sources that were up-to-date, longitudinal, and representative of all client groups. In many cases, they incorporated information and research from other studies conducted within the system. The more complex components of the process were not as consistently acceptable as the committee membership and data sources. Each of these areas was rated as acceptable, however, for approximately two-thirds of the systems. (See Table 2, Appendix A for the percentage of systems rated as acceptable or commendable for each component.)

2. Difficulties experienced in conducting needs assessments

Several problem areas were identified from the interviews and from the ERA analysis of the needs assessment reports submitted by each school system. To gain the perspective of the local education agencies, those interviewed were asked to identify any problems or difficulties they had experienced in conducting their needs assessments. Fifty-three percent said that they had experienced no problems, 23% had experienced a few problems, and 18% were continuing to have difficulty with the process. Although not cited as a problem with the process, 32% of the systems, including many of those who said they had not experienced problems with the needs assessment, mentioned that the process was time consuming. However, nearly all said that the outcomes were worth the time and effort involved. It was generally felt that the time required is not as great as it was during the initial year of implementation.

Of the systems citing some type of difficulty in conducting the needs assessments, some areas were more frequently mentioned. Twenty-two percent had difficulty compiling data and the same percentage said that they did not like having to ask teachers and administrators to be involved in the process without being able to provide release time or financial compensation. Ten percent said cuts in funding limited their capacity to conduct the needs assessment or to provide programs to meet the identified needs. Approximately the same percentage complained that it was difficult to maintain the focus of committee members on system-wide student needs rather than on individual programs or services to be offered. Concerns mentioned by four or fewer coordinators included the problems involved in initiating the process the first year; the work load placed upon the coordinator, particularly when the needs assessment is an additional duty; difficulty communicating, especially within the larger school systems where programs are departmentalized; the workload involved with conducting the needs assessment annually; adding to the number of questionnaires the school system is already conducting; and identifying needs that support upper level Career Ladder teachers who expected that they would have supplementary work through the Extended Contract Program.

ERA services' analysis of needs assessments revealed some difficulties in making the transition between the previous practice of planning activities to meet teacher needs and the mandated shift to planning to address student needs. Maintaining a focus on student needs rather than on desired programs or services was an area which was difficult for many school systems. For example, questionnaires were often constructed as "wish lists" asking various stakeholder groups to rank the programs and services they perceive as a need. A few systems have continued to collect data

specifically to document the need for programs and services that they wish to provide rather than examining information that might indicate other student needs.

Another area of difficulty noted by ERA services relates to translating the prioritized needs from the needs assessment into the goals and objectives of the Extended Contract Program. Once again, there has been a tendency to focus on activities rather than student needs or desired outcomes. Forty-two percent of the school systems continue to have difficulty in formulating goals and objectives that focus on desired student outcomes rather than activities or services to be provided. Even with specific feedback to assist with the formulation of goals and objectives that address student needs, this continues to be a problem area. Budgetary constraints in Tennessee could have contributed to the lack of improvement in this area. In many systems, Extended Contract funds were diverted for the 1991-92 school year to operational needs.

3. Significant areas of student concern across the state of Tennessee identified through the needs assessment process

Since the initial year of implementation of the needs assessment process, school systems have expanded the number of priorities they have identified and have improved their efforts to focus on student needs rather than programs. The majority of the high priority needs currently identified focus on improving student academic performance, increasing student academic opportunities, reducing the number of at-risk students and/or dropouts, and improving parent involvement. (See Appendix B for a presentation of prioritized needs across all systems for the 1989-90, 1990-91, and 1991-92 school years.)

The need for student academic improvement has been the category cited a priority by the largest percentage of the school systems (34% in 1989-90; 42% in 1990-91 and 43% in 1991-92). Within the category the need was either identified specifically as improved academic performance or as an area considered to be closely related such as improved attendance, reducing the number of students in need of remediation, improved self-esteem or motivation, improved test scores, increased promotion or graduation rates, and improved discipline and student behavior. The actual need for improving student academic performance was listed as the top priority for school systems for the last three years (51% in 1989-90; 40% in 1990-91; and 43% in 1991-92). (See Appendix C for a listing of the needs ranked as top priorities from 1989-90 to 1991-92.)

The need for increased student academic opportunities was the second highest category of prioritized needs (27% in 1989-90; 25% in 1990-91 and 25% in 1991-92). This category relates to enhancing the academic, emotional, social, or physical well-being of students through increased enrichment opportunities. Additional frequently identified priorities were decreasing the number of at-risk students and dropouts, improving parent/community involvement, expanding opportunities for vocational or career planning, upgrading instructional effectiveness, increasing counseling and guidance services, addressing alcohol and drug abuse problems, and improving school climate. Fewer than 10% of the systems also identified the need for curriculum expansion and integration.

4. Impact of the needs assessment process on the Extended Contract Program

From ERA services' analysis of the 1991-92 Extended Contract Program proposals, it is apparent that the needs assessment process has had an impact on the Extended Contract Program. A clear link exists between high priority needs and the Extended Contract Program. For more than two-thirds of the systems, the Extended Contract Program goals and objectives are directly related to the needs assessment priorities. For almost all of the remaining systems, the relationship to the needs was evident in the focus of the activities even though they were not specifically addressed in the goals and objectives. Only two systems (1%) lacked any apparent relationship between the needs assessment priorities and the Extended Contract Proposal.

ERA services' analysis also indicates that the needs assessment process has had an impact upon the effectiveness of the activities selected for the Extended Contract Program. Evaluative data from Extended Contract Program activities is required as a data source for the annual needs assessment. This has underscored the importance of assessing progress made toward desired student outcomes. It has also focused the attention of school personnel on the quality of the activities and services provided. Adaptations and alterations in program proposals have been made by a large percentage of systems based upon this information. This is an area, however, that continues to need improvement for many school systems.

5. Impact of the needs assessment process on overall educational efforts

In individual interviews, needs assessment coordinators were able to identify the educational impact of the needs assessment within their individual school systems. There were several specific educational improvements cited by large percentages of the coordinators. Of the school systems contacted, 87% cited examples of educational improvements resulting from the needs assessment process, 8% said there were not aware of specific improvements, and 4% were unsure of the impact of the needs assessment.

The most frequently mentioned improvement was the impact that the needs assessment has had on identifying student needs. More than two-thirds of the coordinators said it had helped them improve their efforts in identifying student needs by forcing them to look at data they had not previously considered. Through this process, they were able to confirm their intuitions about student needs. Several said their expanded information base has given them more confidence in the needs they had perceived to exist prior to the implementation of the process. In some cases the needs assessment process indicated needs that had been overlooked in the past. In other cases, the inclusion of longitudinal data indicated patterns of needs that had remained consistent or changed over a period of time. Over half of the coordinators said the needs assessment process had helped them focus their system's efforts on addressing high priority student needs. They specifically cited the advantages of being able to devise solid programs based on documented needs and in directing limited funds to address their high priority needs.

Approximately a fifth of the school systems indicated that the needs assessment process itself had improved communication among school personnel, parents, and community members. A number of systems indicated that involvement with the needs assessment process had generated interest in the need for long range planning. Some systems have expanded the process to one that is more comprehensive. The majority saw the value in regularly and systematically updating what they were currently doing.

Needs assessment coordinators also cited a variety of purposes for which the needs assessment has been used within the school systems. An overwhelming majority of the schools (91%) have used the needs assessment in conjunction with other program planning. Of those remaining, 4% were unsure of the use of the needs assessment beyond the Extended Contract Program. Only two systems said specifically that they had not used the needs assessment in any capacity other than documenting needs for the Extended Contract Program.

While the coordinators mentioned a variety of uses for the needs assessments or components of the needs assessments, there were two areas in which they were used by a large percentage of the school systems across the state. Eighty-three percent of the interviewed systems have incorporated some aspect of the needs assessment into their state mandated Board of Education five year plans. Two-thirds of the systems indicated that they used components of the needs assessment (e.g., data, surveys, findings) with other programs that require needs assessments. Most frequently mentioned were Chapter 2 (45%), Chapter 1(45%), Title 2 (14%), and Vocational Education (9%).

A number of the coordinators also said that they are using needs assessment information with other programs or services provided by their systems such as Head Start, special education, planning of enrichment activities, student class scheduling, and inservice planning, and curriculum development. A small percentage of systems noted additional uses for the needs assessment which included applications for grants and system recognition.

The interviews also indicated that some unintended outcomes have resulted from the implementation of the needs assessment process. Sixty-one percent cited positive side effects resulting from the needs assessment process, 36% were not aware of any side effects or unintended outcomes, and 2% identified a negative side effect.

The most frequently mentioned positive side effect of the process was the improvement in system-wide coordination of various program efforts to address the needs of students (42%). Specifically mentioned was the benefit of working closely with Chapter 1 and vocational personnel in consolidating effort and reducing duplication of services. The second area frequently cited as a positive outcome was an increase in teacher and parent involvement and confidence in the decision making process (38%). For example, several mentioned that the process itself provided a means to generate discussion regarding the relationship of student needs and curriculum and instruction. In addition, some noted that the evaluation process has contributed to improving program outcomes. A slightly smaller percentage (20%) cited improvements in public relations based on access of parents, community members, and media to the process and to information about system-wide needs. Another twenty percent noted that improvements in program planning have resulted from expanding the perceptions of various stakeholder groups and focusing on the broad range of student needs within the system. According to some of the coordinators, the process has shifted the focus from reactive measures to preventive approaches.

Also mentioned, but only by one system, was the recognition they received from other states for exemplary programs based on identified needs. The only negative side effect mentioned related to misunderstandings during the initial implementation of the needs assessment process which have since been corrected.

Conclusions and Discussion

1. Common guidelines for conducting needs assessments can be designed that are within the capabilities and resources of all school systems.

The needs assessment process was designed to provide a systematic means for determining student needs that could be implemented on a statewide basis. The guidelines for conducting needs assessments provided clear parameters, but were flexible enough to accommodate the conditions within each school system. While the general processes used and final needs assessments were similar in form, the specific procedures and end products were as diverse as Tennessee's 143 school systems. In addition, LEAs involved in site based management were able to apply the process at individual school sites. In general, nearly every LEA was able to meet the guidelines to a satisfactory degree.

A major activity such as conducting a needs assessment necessarily requires resources in terms of personnel, time, supplies, and clerical or technical support. Unfortunately, within Tennessee's school systems these resources are often in short supply. Every attempt was made to require a product that could be accomplished given the system's available resources. It was originally anticipated that the systems with fewer resources would have more difficulty in producing a needs

assessment equal in quality to those systems with more resources. It became evident that although there may have been more constraints, some systems with meager resources were able to produce a document of high quality.

2. Implementation of the needs assessment process, consistent with change theory, was incremental.

When the Extended Contract Program was initiated, most school systems allowed Extended Contract teachers to plan activities of their choice as long as they were approved by the State Department of Education. When the legislation was enacted to require that the Extended Contract Program address identified student needs, it required a major change in mind set for many Extended Contract coordinators and the personnel they represented. There were misconceptions during the initial year, some resistance to the mandate, and a number of complaints about the time and work involved. For many of the systems this was the first attempt to systematically assess needs or to engage in formal planning processes. For some this required unfamiliar processes of involving others in decision making and of retrieving and analyzing information on some previously unexplored areas of student performance. In addition, some negative attitudes had to be confronted.

As with any new program, it takes time for those responsible to adapt to changes in philosophy and procedures. Although the training and assistance provided some preparation for the process, it still required some effort for coordinators to determine how to apply it in their particular situations. After the first year, the majority of the problems encountered had been resolved and, as a result of the technical assistance and experience, strategies were developed to alleviate the remaining problem areas during the next year.

The extent of "buy in" to the process has varied among the systems, but for most, the commitment has increased as the school leaders and local personnel have seen the value in conducting comprehensive needs assessments. Those coordinators who carried out the needs assessment initially with a commitment to focusing on student needs prior to any program planning have seen more value in the process than have those who misused the process to document the need for programs or services they were already providing. The level of commitment appears to be consistent with expectancy theory in that when those involved perceive that their efforts will achieve a valued outcome and that they are capable of making that difference, they will work to see that it happens. Those coordinators who saw the process as a valuable one and put forth the effort during the initial year were the ones most committed to the process. Others have joined them as they have seen the payoffs and have continued to expand or refine their process.

3. Conditions within the organization influence the scope and use of the needs assessment.

Several organizational factors have had an impact on the comprehensiveness of the needs assessment process and the extent of its use. The position of the person assigned the needs assessment responsibility to a large extent determined the difficulty of the task as well as its potential for use beyond the Extended Contract Program. When the coordinator had easy access to system-wide information and had responsibility for administering other instructional programs, the needs assessment process was seen as less formidable and more helpful. The needs assessment was also seen as a significant activity when the upper level leadership directed attention to the project. When system-level commitment was apparent, resources and support were more readily provided.

The level of collaborative relationships within the system was an additional influence on the development and implementation of the needs assessment. Those systems with open lines of

communication and with various program leaders accustomed to working closely together were able to assess their needs and make decisions anticipated to have a more unified impact on the needs of students. Systems in which personnel were available and willing to be involved also had fewer problems than others where the workload was so heavy that there was a reluctance to take on an additional assignment.

4. Third party monitoring and assistance can improve the quality of the needs assessments.

The state department's role of monitoring progress, providing feedback, and giving technical assistance was helpful in enhancing the integrity of the process and the quality of the product. The increasing quality of the needs assessment reports indicates that there is a trend toward expanding their comprehensiveness and use. Initial and follow up technical assistance given to the LEAs appeared to benefit many of those responsible for coordinating the process. The feedback provided annually was incorporated by most of the systems. While progress is evident, continued effort is needed. There remains a clear distinction between those LEAs that have conducted needs assessments to identify needs and those that have conducted them to justify continuing doing what they are currently doing. These are areas currently being addressed by ERA services.

Many systems have asked for additional technical assistance regarding the process and related areas such as survey development, data analysis and portrayal, approaches in conducting committee meetings, and strategies for decision making and consensus. In the past there have been few opportunities for LEA representatives to receive individualized assistance. Most of the individuals who have requested additional help from ERA services have openly stated that they appreciate the availability of an objective and nonthreatening assistance service. Expanding technical assistance is a future goal for ERA services.

5. The needs assessment process is a critical component in educational improvement efforts.

One of the primary reasons that so many educational improvement efforts fail is the lack of a solid information base from which to plan and make decisions. Too often schools, school systems, and state departments of education buy into "quick fixes" or programs that may or may not adequately address their particular needs. Conducting a comprehensive needs assessment allows a school staff or a school system the opportunity to carefully examine the current state, to articulate the desired state, and to concentrate their efforts on ways to close the gap between the two.

The needs assessment process provides direction for improvement efforts at both the local and state levels. At the local level, priorities identified by the needs assessment process can drive educational efforts within the system. Tennessee's experience has shown that Extended Contract Programs have become more congruent with documented student needs. As a result of three years of involvement with an ongoing process, the school systems have begun to develop a longitudinal data base in many areas that is allowing them to track student progress beyond current performance. This is beginning to result in a shift in program planning toward understanding problems before identifying solutions. It has resulted in a change in perspective from reaction to prevention and has resulted, as many have said, in better decision making at the local level. An unintended outcome, but a welcome one, is that expanding the awareness of school personnel, parents, and community members regarding needed educational improvements helps develop a sense of commitment and unity of purpose among those involved. Another side effect is that the priorities identified by the needs assessment have also become a driving force behind staff development efforts and have, in some cases, become an integral part of system-wide long range planning efforts.

The needs assessment process can also drive educational efforts at the state level. A better understanding at the state level of the needs and concerns of LEAs across the state can provide the same solid data base for state-wide long range planning efforts. By analyzing the needs identified by each system, the State Department of Education can monitor trends and link systems with others with similar needs.

The process also assists state department personnel in helping local systems allocate substantial Extended Contract resources in the most efficient manner to address their high priority needs. It is significant that the funds allocated to the systems may be distributed based on the discretion of those at the local level. The progress made in the Extended Contract Program by school systems across Tennessee in strategically addressing high priority student needs underscores the importance of encouraging local level decision making and accountability.

APPENDIX A

RATINGS OF NEEDS ASSESSMENTS
1991-1992

Table 1
Overall Needs Assessments

	Number of School Systems	Percentage of School Systems
Commendable	14	10%
Acceptable to Highly Acceptable	83	68%
Minimally Acceptable	40	28%
Unsatisfactory	6	4%

Table 2
Components of the Needs Assessment Process

	Percentage Rated as Acceptable to Commendable
Committee Membership	97%
Data Sources	77%
Data Summary	64%
Discrepancy Analysis	70%
Discrepancies	65%
Prioritizing Process	62%
Priorities	69%

APPENDIX B

AREAS OF PRIORITIZED NEEDS

	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92
Increased Student Academic Opportunities			
Enrichment activities	84	105	117
Extended day opportunities	25	36	39
Adult literacy	19	34	35
Summer/transition program	--	29	23
Expanded opportunities for the gifted	11	25	23
Special education	9	17	14
Computer literacy	2	17	14
Total:	150	263	265
Total Percentage:	27%	25%	25%
At-Risk Students			
At-risk students	69	63	64
Dropouts	--	47	46
Total:	69	110	110
Total Percentage:	12%	11%	10%
Student Academic Improvement			
Academic performance	79	70	93
Attendance	40	69	57
Remediation	38	64	64
Self-esteem/motivation	--	64	66
Improved test scores	26	63	71
Increased promotion/graduation	--	56	62
Tutoring	--	28	24
Discipline and behavior	9	21	16
Total:	192	435	453
Total Percentage:	34%	42%	43%
Curriculum Enhancement/Improvement	21	60	55
Total:	21	60	55
Total Percentage:	4%	6%	5%
Parent/Community Involvement	59	86	84
Total:	59	86	84
Total Percentage:	11%	8%	8%
Other			
Vocational/Career guidance	8	23	22
Teacher effectiveness/Staff development	19	21	23
Counseling and guidance	35	18	20
School climate	--	10	10
Drug and Alcohol Abuse Concerns	5	15	13
Total:	67	87	88
Total Percentage:	12%	8%	8%

APPENDIX C

STUDENT ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT NEEDS RANKED AS THE NUMBER ONE PRIORITY

	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92
Academic performance	41	38	41
Attendance	10	4	3
Remediation	24	23	21
Self-esteem/motivation	--	5	10
Improved test scores	5	7	8
Increased promotion/graduation	--	13	6
Tutoring opportunities	--	5	4
Improved discipline/behavior	--	1	2
Total:	80	96	95